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NICARAGUA

Nineteen members of a New England peace group were scheduled to leave Sunday for the Nicaragua-Honduras border where they plan to protest any U.S. military intervention in the troubled region.

At a worship ceremony Saturday, Witness for Peace, a nationwide ecumenical group representing nine denominations in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, pledged to wage a peaceful vigil at the violence-plagued border.

"We'll literally stand at the border in a nonviolent protest," said Leanne Tigert, a United Church of Christ minister. "We'll be in solidarity with the Nicaraguans who are already there."

The nationwide peace group, whose members range in age from 24 to 70, opposes "overt and covert intervention" in Nicaragua by the U.S. government which it says is providing CIA support to Contras fighting the Nicaraguan government.

The group plans to live for two weeks in the area where a U.S. pilot was shot and killed recently after landing his helicopter, but several members said they are willing to risk their own personal comfort to highlight the uncertainty and suffering of the Central American people.

"If there is an attack, we would depend upon people in the local community to tell us what to do. If there was an actual mortar attack I guess we would just hit the dirt," said Frances Crowe of Northampton.

Many church and religious groups, including Baptists, Methodists, and Jews, are funding the trip. The group has organized nine other similar trips to the area.